

Health Equity Recommendations Selected Overview – October 15, 2009

Extract from DRA Project Report 09 01

The table below compares the areas for health equity recommendations from 10 major reports contained in the DRA Project Report (09 01) *Health Equity Policies: A Review of the Recommendations*. Although they present recommendations, strategies, and/or priorities to create health equity covering many areas, common categories for the recommendations emerged from these 10 reports:

- Early childhood investment
- Education
- Environment, housing, and transportation
- Healthy eating and behaviors
- Employment
- Law enforcement/criminal justice
- Health care

These indicate the growing activity in the health equity movement that focuses on a wide range of policies, all of which affect health. In considering the recommended policies, the themes recognized by the Multnomah County Health Initiative (2009) are relevant:

1. There is no single “magic bullet” policy or short list of policies that will eliminate the inequities that result in health disparities, solutions need to come from the coordinated effort of policy makers, bureaucrats and community members,
2. local efforts at eliminating inequities should be driven by local data on existing health disparities, and
3. local governments should look at their own policies that perpetuate inequities¹.

The following reports are represented in this table:

1. [Reaching for a Healthier Life: Facts on Socioeconomic Status and Health in the U.S.](#), Macarthur Foundation, 2007;
2. [Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: Addressing Inequities in Urban Environments](#), Prevention Institute, 2007;
3. [Closing the gap in a generation: Health Equity through action on the social determinants of health](#), WHO, 2008;
4. [Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy and Active Living Environments](#), Healthy Eating Active Living Convergence Partnership, 2008;
5. [Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America](#), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009;
6. [F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America](#), Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009;
7. [Life and Death from Unnatural Causes: Health and Social Inequity in Alameda County](#), The Alameda County Public Health Department, 2008;
8. [Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative 2009](#), Multnomah County (OR) Health Department, 2009;
9. [The Landscape of Opportunity; Cultivating Health Equity in California](#), California Pan – Ethnic Health Network, 2009; and
10. [Working Together for a Healthier Kansas: A Status Report on the Social Determinants of Health in Kansas](#), Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Center for Health Disparities, 2009.

Table 1: Health Equity Recommendations: Selected Overview

Recommendation Categories	National or Global Focus						State or Local Focus			
	Reaching for a Healthier Life: Facts on Socioeconomic Status and Health in the U.S.	Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: Addressing Inequities in Urban Environments	Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through action on the social determinants of health	Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy and Active Living Environments	Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America	“F” as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America	Life and Death from Unnatural Causes: Health and Social Inequity in Alameda County	Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative 2009	The Landscape of Opportunity: Cultivating Health Equity in California	Working Together for a Healthier Kansas
Early Childhood Investments										
Invest in early childhood initiatives and programs, including early childhood education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education										
Reform or increase funding for K-12 education							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Equalize access to quality K-12 education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Advocate for, invest in, and retain high quality teachers, especially in low-income areas							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increase access and affordability to higher education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environment										
Support of Active Living										
Encourage or ensure safe cities, neighborhoods, communities, streets, recreational areas, and/or buildings		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Encourage active transport or design walkable and bikable communities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improve physical activity at school, including requiring schools to incorporate physical education				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Increase availability and access to parks, play grounds, and/or public use of school facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Housing										
Provide access to safe, affordable, and stable housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Encourage home ownership								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Decrease housing foreclosures							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Transportation										
Promote and increase access to affordable public transportation						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Increase transportation safety, including traffic safety for pedestrians	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Air										
Improve air quality							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Address pollution/climate change issue and its impacts on health and the poor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
Healthy Eating and Behaviors										
Nutrition										
Promote or ensure availability of fresh, healthy food in all communities, especially underserved ones		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Promote access to healthy food, including local healthy food, through tax incentives or programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Tax unhealthy behaviors (cigarettes, alcohol, and junk food) using the money to subsidize affordable healthy food or public health programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Reaching for a Healthier Life: Facts on Socioeconomic Status and Health in the U.S.	Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: Addressing Inequities in Urban Environments	Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through action on the social determinants of health	Promising Strategies for Creating Healthy and Active Living Environments	Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America	“F” as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America	Life and Death from Unnatural Causes: Health and Social Inequity in Alameda County	Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative 2009	The Landscape of Opportunity: Cultivating Health Equity in California	Working Together for a Healthier Kansas
Fresh healthy food should be accessible and incorporated within programs such as WIC, EBT, and Food Stamps		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improve school nutrition. One way is to provide only healthy foods and beverages available in schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Healthy foods should be encouraged and promoted in grocery stores and restaurants. One option is menu labeling				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Limit the amount and density of fast food restaurants							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limit or eliminate junk food advertising, especially to children				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Target obesity and create obesity prevention programs						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Behaviors										
Become a smoke free nation, ban smoking in public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Incentivize/subsidize, or expand interventions for alcohol/drug abuse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limit number and density of liquor stores	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Employment										
Increase minimum wage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implement policies that support a living wage			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increase job opportunities			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Support and increase green jobs or green collar jobs							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Support better working conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Increase access to and/or provide job skills/trainings programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice										
Reduce crime	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reform or revise crime laws, especially those that disproportionately target minorities							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Decrease access to firearms		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
Develop and support violence prevention efforts/programs, especially with youth									<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Promote and support programs for re-entry into the community for former offenders							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Health Care										
Support or provide universal access to quality health care			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care providers or programs							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other										
Encouragement of community cohesion, voice, and collaboration, especially within the health equity movement			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consider health in non-health planning and policies			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Please note that some recommendations from these reports did not fit into these categories. For example, the WHO report, “Closing the Gap in a Generation,” included good global governance and marketplace responsibility as areas for their recommendations. Likewise, the Mac Arthur Foundation Research Network on Socioeconomic Status and Health, “Reaching for a Healthier Life” report noted that disparities increase with the length of the income ladder (income distribution in society) and steepness of steps (distance between income levels on the ladder). Some of their income related recommendations fit within the employment category above, but others do not (i.e. - offer income supports to families for newborns, provide earned income tax credits to reduce the burden on those with less income, secure pension plans and increase savings incentives).

Also, some of the reports include in-depth recommendations which were too detailed to include in this summary table. Thus, the full recommendations in any of the ten included in the table above should be reviewed for specific details in *Health Equity Policies: A Review of the Recommendations*. To access the full memo, please visit: http://www.altfutures.com/draproject/pdfs/Report_09_01_Health_Equity_Policies_A_Review_of_the_Recommendations.pdf. If you have any suggestions or edits, please email jhaasenner@altfutures.com.

ⁱ Multnomah County Health Department. (2009) Multnomah County Health Equity Initiative 2009. Pg. 6. Retrieved from: http://www.mchealth.org/healthequity/documents/HEI_report_2009.pdf.